

**MINUTES
STATE PRESERVES ADVISORY BOARD
JANUARY 9, 2004**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Neil Bernstein, Chair
Robin Fortney
Timothy Sproul
Scott Moats
Laura Jackson
Liz Christiansen

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Kathy Gourley

STAFF PRESENT

John Pearson
Daryl Howell

ADVISORS PRESENT

Paul Christiansen
Bob McKay

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Neil Bernstein called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM on January 9, 2004 at the Wallace State Office Building.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Add: Item 9 - Diane Ford-Shivvers will be speaking on the formation of the Policy and Coordination section of the DNR.

Add: John Pearson will give a preserve nomination update on Delong Savanna.
 Neil Bernstein will give a preserve nomination update on Rock Island.

Change: Daryl Howell would like to change Item 6 – Conservation Areas and Species Richness of Amphibians and Reptiles from a decision item to an informational item.

Add: Neil Bernstein added the following items:
 9a - Jean Prior's retirement
 9b - Hawkeye Wildlife Area
 9c - Preserve monitoring by board members
 9d - Process of nominations and evaluations

- 9e - Finances for the Board – How we can save money
- 10a - Location of meetings for 2004

Motion was made by Scott Moats to approve the amendments to the agenda. Seconded by Tim Sproul. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Neil Bernstein said that under the friends group I mentioned...people were interested in *forming* a friends group, opposed to *funding* a friends group.

John Pearson said under the DeLong Savanna item referring to botanists, that the word “his” should be crossed out and changed to “some”.

Motion was made by Laura Jackson to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESERVE NOMINATION UPDATES

Banister-McGregor Woods – John Pearson said that he has not yet received the final report for the floristic study. We will have to wait until April to examine that report.

Hartman Bluff – Dedication papers have been prepared and circulated to the County Conservation Board and County Board of Supervisors for approval.

Glenwood Resource Center – The first meeting of the team to develop a management plan was held on October 30.

Baylor Prairie –. Report on amphibian, reptile, and small mammals by EcoCentrics has been completed and was included with the agenda.

DeLong Savanna - Karl DeLong asked that we table his nomination for a preserve until further notice.

Motion was made by Tim Sproul to table Karl DeLong's nomination. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried unanimously.

Rock Island – Neil Bernstein said that the City of Cedar Rapids filed a lawsuit against Linn County, specifically the County Conservation Board and the owners of the proposed additions. A summary judgment hearing is to be held on January 27th on the validity of the lawsuit. That has been postponed a week.

Tom Madsen has done plant surveys at Rock Island.

SCENIC PRESERVE CRITERIA STUDY

Mark Ackelson gave an update on the establishment of criteria for State Preserves based on scenic quality. This would allow SPAB to evaluate proposals it receives for Scenic Preserve dedication and also encourage local communities to establish further programs and designations.

Next Steps

- Continue to refine the criteria for selection and implementation
- Model project “run through”
- Field check criteria
- Final Report; criteria for proposed action by SPAB
- Adoption of criteria and process by SPAB

Criteria for Identification

1. Occurs within already defined, established or protected scenic corridor or area
2. Representative of region
3. Undeveloped state (reasonably natural)
4. Definable viewsheds that are protected
5. Can be seen from a public vantage point and the public can view it or derive some other benefit from it (educational value or enhances quality of life)
6. Elicit an emotional or has aesthetic qualities; is better than surrounding areas
7. Part of a region that is of national, state, regional or local significance
8. Is of a consistent quality throughout seasonal changes

Criteria for Implementation

1. Ability to control or manage
2. All affected landowners are agreeable to the area being designated a site
3. Public recognition of scenic qualities

Everything is running on schedule, we're hoping that this project will be completed by the end of this year.

STEELE PRAIRIE

Mark Minger of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) proposes to map and describe post-settlement alluvium in this preserve. He calculated the cost for the NRCS of \$4,000 to complete this. A decision is needed to determine if the Preserves Board wished to reserve funding for this project.

Neil Bernstein said that this request will be added in with the other funding proposals coming before the Board in April.

CONSERVATION AREAS AND SPECIES RICHNESS OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Dr. Brent Danielson of Iowa State University is proposing to conduct a study to determine how the number and size of preserves and other conservation areas affects species richness and relative abundance of amphibian and reptile species. The proposal will be considered for possible funding through the State Wildlife Grants Program that requires a non-federal match. The Board is asked to decide if the project is something they wish to fund directly or have the project submitted during the annual requests for proposals.

Daryl Howell said that there is still a need for additional cash match. We are still negotiating on how much additional work we might like to see with extra effort for surveys for the reptiles. He suggested that the proposal be submitted during regular RFP session.

DRAFT RFP FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

The Board is asked to provide comments and approve the release of the RFP.

Daryl Howell mentioned that he would like to get this sent out next week, so we would like to hear any suggestions or ideas.

Neil Bernstein said that fauna surveys have been completed for Palasades – Dows Preserve. He suggested that this preserve be dropped from the RFP. Another item to consider would be a plant survey at portions of the Hawkeye Wildlife Area.

Motion was made by Robin Fortney to send out the RFP with revised amendments including Kathy Gourley's ideas. Seconded by Scott Moats. Motion carried unanimously.

John Pearson and Daryl Howell will be contacting Kathy Gourley.

FRIENDS GROUP

Neil Bernstein stated that guidelines should be set for those who are willing to participate as a Friend of the Preserve. Listed below are some possible ideas:

- 1) Visit the preserve at least twice a year.
- 2) Note any maintenance needs, vandalism, or other potential problems.
- 3) Write a short paragraph to the Preserves Board in December to outline the findings of #2
- 4) Organize, if possible, a group that will assist in preserve maintenance.

- 5) With permission of board, undertake improvements to the preserve (e.g., removing non-native species, repairing fences, posting signs, etc.)
- 6) If desired, lead field trips to the preserve
- 7) Review information in the Preserves Guide to see what changes might be needed.

Robin Fortney said that a friend of the preserve needs to have a relationship with the preserve manager.

Neil Bernstein said that the Preserve Board and the Preserve Manager should be informed of what is being done at the preserve.

Laura Jackson said that whatever management activities they do, ought to be recorded or communicated to someone. If there is something that needs to be done on the preserve, they should contact or run their ideas before the Board, John or Daryl.

Diane Ford-Shivvers mentioned that there could be training put in place or instruction sheets on how things should be done on a preserve. Merry Rankin, the new Volunteer Coordinator, will be informed that the Volunteer program will be the clearinghouse for projects that need to be approved by the preserve.

Neil Bernstein said that Laura mentioned having a preserve day by inviting the neighbors of the preserve and having a party.

OPEN DISCUSSION

A – Jean Prior was awarded a plaque at her retirement party, thanking her for her help on the preserves.

B – Neil Bernstein mentioned that he believes that parts of Hawkeye Wildlife Area might be good for preserve status. Neil met with the Corp of Engineers and the local DNR manager and his staff, they said to move forward.

C – Preserve Monitoring by Board Members

Neil Bernstein said that if members could visit the preserve, snap a couple of pictures, write a short article and then bring it in for the Conservationist magazine. This is a great opportunity to keep the Preserves in the public eye. Neil asked the board members to choose a couple of preserves to visit over the couple of months and to report back at the next meeting.

Neil – Williams Prairie, Hanging Bog

Laura – Cedar Hills Sand Prairie

Scott – Freda, Haffner Kettlehole, Mt. Talbot, Five Ridge and other Northwest area preserves

Motion was made by Robin Fortney to request that site managers be contacted through the Preserves Board and that as Board members we are going to visit a couple of Preserves and report back. Seconded by Scott Moats. Motion carried unanimously.

D – Evaluate Potential Preserve

Neil Bernstein suggested that we should have a process of evaluation for potential preserves. Neil asked for any volunteers who may like to generate a list of ideas for the process.

E – Finances

Neil Bernstein suggested that since the funding for the DNR keeps getting shaped finer, we could help in cutting the cost by sharing hotel rooms, car pooling, etc.

Diane Ford-Shivvers announced that she is now the Supervisor for the Policy and Coordination Section for Conservation and Recreation Division. Merry Rankin has filled the position as the program director for the Volunteer section. Diane suggested that it may be good to have at least one board member represented at the Natural Resource Commission Meetings.

Mark Loescke, Mike Gipple, Jane Clark and Paul Christiansen joined the Board at their meeting yesterday. Topics discussed included:

- Restorations
- Single-species sites
- Common natural communities
- How to know whether a site is among the best of its kind in the absence of statewide inventory?
- How “good” is sufficient for admission to the preserve system? How to measure merits of nominations?
- Should we move from passively receiving nominations to recruiting high-quality sites? If so, how?

NEXT MEETING

The next State Preserves Advisory Board meeting will be held on April 2nd, 2004 in Johnson County.

John Pearson mentioned the possibility of reserving the Kent Park facility to hold the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

***Motion was made by Robin Fortney to adjourn. Seconded by Scott Moats.
Motion carried unanimously.***

With no further business to come before the State Preserves Advisory Board, Chairperson Neil Bernstein adjourned the meeting at 12:00 PM on January 9, 2004.

A

Adjournment, 6
approve agenda, 1
approve minutes, 2

B

Board Members Present, 1

C

call to order, 1
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and reptiles, 4

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Scenic preserve criteria study, 3
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Steele Prairie, 3